

AS

BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DOCKET NO. 96-026-C - ORDER NO. 96-199 ✓  
MARCH 19, 1996

IN RE: Request of Farmers Telephone Long Distance, ) ORDER  
Inc. for Approval to Change its Maximum ) APPROVING  
Rate Table and Current Rate Schedules for ) REVISIONS  
Intrastate Message Telecommunications ) TO TARIFF  
Service. )

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on the request of Farmers Telephone Long Distance, Inc. (FLD or the Company) for approval of revisions to its Maximum Rate Table and its Current Rate Schedules for Intrastate Message Telecommunications Service.

By letter dated December 13, 1995, the Commission's Executive Director instructed FLD to publish, one time, at its own expense, a prepared Notice of Filing in newspapers of general circulation in the areas affected by the filing and to provide proof of publication to the Executive Director. The Executive Director also instructed FLD to provide a financial impact statement of the revenue increase and/or decrease to the Company associated with each service offering being revised by this filing. FLD complied with the instructions of the Executive Director. No protests or Petitions to Intervene were filed with the Commission. As FLD's request involved increasing the maximum rates, the Commission instructed the Commission Staff to set this matter for hearing.

On March 5, 1996, at 11:00 a.m., the Commission convened a public hearing on this matter in the Commission's hearing room at 111 Doctors Circle, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Rudolph Mitchell, Chairman, presided. FLD was not represented by counsel; Florence P. Belser, Staff Counsel, represented the Commission Staff.

Wilmot E. McCutchen, President of FLD, appeared and offered testimony to explain the tariff filing. Mr. McCutchen testified that FLD's basic rates for residential service, marketed under the name of "FLD's Best Plus," are based on matching the lowest rate of AT&T, MCI, and Sprint for any given mileage band or rate period on any particular call. In order to implement this plan, Mr. McCutchen testified that FLD periodically reviews the tariffs of the "big three carriers" for rate changes and then in turn changes the tariffs of FLD accordingly. Mr. McCutchen stated that the tariff changes addressed in this matter are in response to tariff changes by AT&T in August 1995 and by MCI and Sprint in October 1995. Mr. McCutchen further testified that this is the first request by FLD for an increase in maximum rates and that the proposed maximum rates are indential to AT&T's maximum rates. Mr. McCutchen testified that the projected revenue impact from the proposed rate changes is a positive \$7,205 per month or \$86,460 per year based on December 1995 intrastate minutes.


Upon careful review of the tariff filing and the evidence presented at the hearing, the Commission finds and concludes that FLD should be allowed to revise its maximum tariff. The Commission finds the new maximum rate tables reasonable. Further,

the Commission accepts the revised current rate schedules for filing as required by Commission Order No. 84-622 dated August 2, 1984, where the Commission approved a rate design for inter-LATA carriers which included only a maximum rate level for each tariff charge and where the Commission stated that "upon approval of maximum levels for the rates, adjustments of the particular rates below the maximum would not constitute a general ratemaking proceeding or even a modification of an existing rate since the prior approval of the maximum constitutes approval of each and every lower rate level." Order 84-622, p. 24.

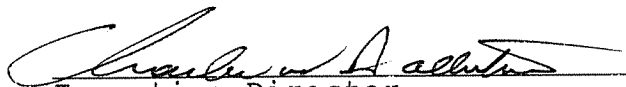
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

1. The maximum rate tables submitted by FLD are hereby approved.
2. This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

  
Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Executive Director

(SEAL)